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HE STILL THE TEMPEST.

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BY F. O. SAYLES.



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THIS LITTLE BOOK IS DEDICATED
TO
THE CANDID READER,
BY THE AUTHOR.

P R E F A C E.

THE following brief and humble essay is offered to the public, without pretension to genius, or art; but in the hope that it may afford a momentary interest, at least, to all who read it.

THE AUTHOR.

HE STILL THE TEMPEST.

HE STILLS THE TEMPEST.

And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves ; but he was asleep. And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us ; we perish. MATT. VIII. 24, 25.



THE universe has forces adequate
To purposed ends, throughout im-
mensity,

Adapted all by wisdom infinite,
Controlled by laws, immutable as God.

A holy calm broods o'er the vasty deep,
Whose solemn stillness moves the sluggish soul ;
For, silence gives to thought expansion, depth,
And freedom to explore aerial heights.

The pent up winds, unloosed, sweep o'er the land,
And prostrate oft the stable works of man ;
Or, from his lofty throne hurl down the oak,
And lay the forest monarch on the earth.

The earthquake shakes the isle and continent,
Engulfs the city—rolls old ocean back—
And spreads destruction, terrible to man !
When spent his rage, down to his dark abode
Profound, returning, slumbers in his home,
Quiet, till duty calls him forth again.

Winds rock the sea, and roll the mountain
waves—

Lashed by the fury of the driving gale,
The waters surge and break—then their tall crests
Are clothed with fleecy foam. The ship, laden
With precious merchandise and human souls,
And lighter craft that skims along the main,

Both, rightly trimmed, to the wild tempest stand—
Heave with the mighty swell, and struggling, ride
The spumy height, a moment, and then sink
To the abyss—perchance, to rise again.

Amid the awful and sublime display
Of elements, is the precarious home
Of the stout-hearted mariner, who braves
The perils of the sea—outrides the storm,
And in his trusted, or some friendly bark,
Favored of fortune, a safe haven makes !
Or, by the raging billows overwhelmed,
Descends to the unfathomable deep ;
Where, on an earthy, or a rocky bed—
Upon a couch, composed of sea-weed green—
Or, in a spacious, coral, tinted tomb,
May rest his lifeless form in death's long sleep.
And what is death, and what its cold repose,
Illimitable to the mortal sense ?

A transmutation of our form to dust,
Inanimate, as is the barren clod,—
To all the living, that untried event,
Certain, yet little pondered by the mass
Of beings, verging to the final change,—
The mortal state, for immortality,—
Life's joys and pangs, for unknown bliss, or woe,—
A mystery, the living cannot solve.
“Man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?”
Does death kill both the body and the soul?
What lies beyond this earthly pilgrimage?
No traveler returns from that pale realm,
To tell the living of their destiny.
Nature, in her great works, analogy,
And Revelation, all unite to prove
Man's spirit is victorious over death,—
The spirit has the witness in itself,
Asserting its own immortality.
Were man all mortal, life would be a farce ;

Nay more, a libel on the attributes
Of his Creator, Governor, and God.

When dangers imminent on land, or sea,
Arise, and hope of safety vanishes,
Destruction shows his all-appalling form,
That shocks the most depraved in wickedness,
And makes him quail, who long defied his power.
E'en one, who, in the vigor of his years,
Had studied earnestly to learn life's aim—
The duties mortals owe to God and man—
The happiness mankind create, to bless
Themselves, or misery that will afflict
The race, in time and in eternity,
(If retribution follow just awards,)
And, who had pondered well, the great event,
Awaiting all in earthly tenements,
Will shrink and shudder at the near approach
To that dread state, the future, yet untried.

Not to his victims all—to them alone,
Whose treasure truly is laid up in heaven—
To them, o'ercome with life's severest ills,
Can Death be welcome, and his presence peace.
Frail man has not an ever present faith,
Abiding in him, watchful to control
His varying passions—ward off slavish fear—
Remove all doubt—true reason satisfy—
And, on unfailing pinions, bear the soul,
And make it calmly will its destiny.

A humble bark departed from the shore,
To cross the little sea, Tiberias ;
This ancient vessel was diminutive—
Unlike the splendid palace of a king,
Floating upon the waters, and replete
With comforts of an earthly quality,
Or, with adornments to attract the eyes
Of all whose minds delight in mere display,

And feast, unsparingly, on vanity,—
It was not laden with commercial stores
Of valued treasure, to exchange for gold,
Or with the famous, glittering wealth of “Ind,”
Or “Ormus,” or “Golconda’s” gemmy mines,—
It bore no worldly, titled potentates,
Who reigned o’er kingdoms with despotic power,—
None, on whose brow was bound the laurel wreath
Of victory, blood-stained, in battle won,
And worn to designate the conqueror,—
No polished courtier—minister of state,
Or money king who sates a nation’s wants!
No *sapient* philosopher, who reads
The Book of Nature with discernment clear,
And, by the aid of logic, fully proves
The Bible and its teachings, fabulous!
But, the disciples and their trusted Lord,—
He, who had walked the sea—had healed the sick,
And made the blind to see—the deaf to hear—

The halt to leap—and, who had raised the dead!
Who devils had cast out of them, possessed,
Had Satan, the arch-fiend of hell, rebuked,
When, on the mountain, he had tempted Him,—
Who spurned the proffer of the kingdoms all,—
He, who should come, as prophets had foretold,
To save a lost, and sin-polluted world,—
Ambassador of Heaven to earth—the Son
Of man—the Son of God—were there embarked
In that frail ship, a humble company,
As voyagers, to cross this narrow sea.
Then a great tempest in the sea arose;
So great, the ship was covered with the waves;
But He, their faithful master, was asleep.
The wind, tempestuous to fury, lashed
The troubled deep, and rolled the billows high,
Dashing incessant, on the little bark,
Now feebly struggling with impending fate,—
These humble seamen deemed their ship was lost!

Hope of escape from death, by mortal aid,
Had vanished—an instantaneous dread
Of change, from present to a future state,
All indescribable, possessed the souls
Of men, who looked destruction in the face!
But, He who slept e'er danger threatened, still
Was sleeping in their midst, in quietness,—
The raging tempest had no fears for Him.
To Him, faith pointed as the light and life
Of dying man,—and Him they quickly sought.
Who live, must die—decree immovable—
Yet, nature yields but to necessity,
With most who “shuffle off the mortal coil,”
And go forever, to be here no more.
Here was a flying moment for relief,—
It might be granted, or, might be denied!
They sought of Christ—who seek aright, shall find:
And his disciples, moved by faith and fear,
Came unto, and awoke him, “saying, Lord,

Save us ; we perish !” and the winds and sea
The Lord rebuked,—then followed a great calm.
The roaring wind that moved the troubled deep
To fury, at His word was quickly hushed ;
The waves that threatened ruin to the ship,
Receded, and the restless waters slept ;
The tempest, born of warring elements,
Subsided, and the sea was placid then.

When human passions rise, fierce anger burns,
And mental elements, in strife engaged,
Grow into storm—hatred to malice grows ;
Shuts quite, or narrows that small avenue
Through which, Benevolence and Charity,
Love, both to God and man, flow to, and from
The soul, thereby, the mind becomes a waste—
A home for enemies of happiness—
For self-conceit, and inhumanity—
For avarice, and lust of power—for crime !

Whene'er the heart is sick, and truly loathes
These vile companions, and from their control
Would find relief, and safety would obtain
From passion's fearful tempest and its curse,
Ask aid of Him who calmed the raging sea,
And heed the sacred teachings of His word.
The Saviour thus to his disciples said :
"Why are ye fearful, ye of little faith?"
But the men marvelled at the miracle,
Which taught them plainly that their Lord had
power
To make the winds and sea obey his will,—
This was a trial and a test of faith.

When wonder ceased, the mighty force of truth
Dispelled the mist of doubt, and vanished fear.
Knowledge became a light to guide the mind,
As does the lighted lamp, in darkness show
The traveler his path, till morning dawns.

So, was the miracle, performed by Christ,
Who calmed the raging tempest in the sea,
To the beholders, full, convincing proof,
That God was manifest in human form,
And present, as their only potent friend.
Who serve two masters, service cannot yield
With perfect heart, and with a willing mind,
To Him whose claim is paramount and just.
The character, displayed in history,
Of men selected by the Son of God,
To be companions and his followers,
While he was clothed with frail humanity,
Unlettered, poor, and then unknown to fame,
Is still the Christian model for mankind.
Grant, there be those, who would, and daily strive
The true example well to imitate,—
Who feel their frailty—pity other's woes,
And seek to love their neighbors as themselves,
But, multitudes profess before the world,

To be engrafted branches of that vine,
Which is the symbol of the holy church;
And yet, they are unlike the humble band,
That crossed the sea, when Christ the tempest
 stilled.

These branches have a pride and vanity,
Which the light-minded and impenitent
Admire and patronize, as alamode,—
Devotedness to fashion—worldly rank—
A thirst for wealth, that steels the tender heart
Against the claims of true benevolence,
Obliterates all nobleness of soul,
And forms a character, so destitute
Of what adorns e'en rough humanity,
And what so ill befits the name of saint,
That misers might adopt it for their own.

The history of Christians primitive,
Who saw the Saviour's meek and holy life,

And lived aloof from foul hypocrisy,
Steadfast in faith of that which is to come
To all, who work the works of righteousness,
And tread the pathway of humility,
Portrays a contrast, well-defined, to-day,
Between them, and the MEEK of modern time.
They, in a kingdom, other than this world,
Where moth and rust do not corrupt, and where
Thieves break not through and steal—a heavenly—
Grounded their hope of rest and happiness,—
Where, with a constant faithfulness, they strove
To lay up treasure for eternity.
They neither had, nor sought possessions great,—
Were not vain-glorious, nor puffed with pride,—
They looked for no abiding city here,—
The sin that now so easily besets,
They shunned,—the shining bubble left behind,—
Mammon was not a deity to them,—
They served one Master, unto martyrdom !



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